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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Fifty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 21 June 2004 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Israel, the occupying Power, continues to build its expansionist Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in direct violation of General Assembly resolution ES-10/13 of 21 October 2003, in which the Assembly demanded "that Israel stop and reverse the construction of the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem, which is in departure of the Armistice Line of 1949 and is in contradiction to relevant provisions of international law". The occupying Power has continued to confiscate even more Palestinian land, to bulldoze and destroy more Palestinian property and to accelerate the building of the Wall also in blatant disregard for Assembly resolution ES-10/14, in which the Assembly requested the International Court of Justice to urgently render an advisory opinion on the issue, and in contempt for the ongoing deliberations of the Court on the matter.

In recent weeks, the occupying Power has issued land confiscation orders to Palestinians in the town of Salfit in preparation for the construction of the expansionist Wall deep in the Palestinian territory around the illegal settlement of "Ariel", which is located about 12 miles east of the Green Line and at the point in which the West Bank is only about 33 miles wide. According to several reports, the current plan is to build the Wall east of "Ariel" and other nearby illegal settlements, in what are being called "fingernails" by the occupying Power, leading to the de facto annexation of huge tracts of Palestinian land. Dozens of Palestinian villages and thousands of Palestinian inhabitants will be detrimentally affected by the construction of the Wall in these areas, with many of the villages being completely suffocated in walled enclaves.

Also, the occupying Power continues its illegal settlement and Wall activities on confiscated Palestinian land, in particular in and around Occupied East Jerusalem. The building of the Wall in, around and through the towns of A-Ram and Qalandiyah, north of Jerusalem, is isolating the villages and families from each

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other and making the lives of the Palestinian residents even more difficult to sustain. Protests and demonstrations against the Wall by Palestinians, Israelis and international activists in the Occupied Palestinian Territory have become a more frequent occurrence as Israel continues and accelerates its construction. The response of the Israeli occupying forces to the demonstrators has been characterized by its typical use of excessive, indiscriminate and disproportionate force. Dozens of Palestinians have been injured in recent days as they protested Israeli plans to confiscate thousands of acres of more land and tried to prevent demolition bulldozers from operating in the areas of 'Azawiyah, Dir Balut, Salfit and other towns and villages being directly affected by the Wall throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The escalation by Israel of such illegal activities and practices is clearly intended not for security purposes, as claimed by the occupying Power, but to entrench the occupying Power's de facto annexation of Palestinian land, particularly land on which illegal settlements have been build, and their surrounding areas, and to thus demarcate a new border in far departure from the pre-1967 borders. In this connection, it is important to draw attention to recent orders by the Israeli Minister for Defense, Mr. Shaul Mofaz, for the accelerated building of thousands more settlement units in the illegal settlement of "Etzion". Israel, in its relentless drive to build such facts on the ground, whether via the settlements or the Wall, has unquestionably aimed at retaining the land, rather than ending this unlawful 37-year occupation.

Such violations and grave breaches of international law continue to be committed by Israel, the occupying Power, while it continues to distract the attention of the international community with its purported plans to "disengage" from the Gaza Strip. In this regard, it is more than evident that Israel intends this disengagement not to be a genuine withdrawal but to be a means of redeploying from Gaza and containing and isolating it completely with no borders and no access to the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. This intention was further clarified when the occupying Power this past week revealed plans to build a moat on Gaza's border with Egypt and opened bidding for contractors who want the project. It is being reported that the moat, which would be dug along the so-called Philadephi route, would be at least 4 kilometres long, 15-25 metres deep and about 120 metres wide, and that the occupying Power intends to demolish even more Palestinian homes in the area.

The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, continues to be critical and is becoming increasingly urgent as each passing day brings more Israeli violations of international law, including international humanitarian law, and of the rights of the Palestinian people. The building of the Wall and all of Israel's illegal practices in this regard are taking us farther away from a peaceful settlement and seriously undermining the two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Indeed, if the building of this expansionist Wall does not cease and it is not dismantled, the two-States solution will be physically impossible to achieve. Such grave threats to the search for peace and stability must be addressed by the international community and urgent efforts must be taken to revive the peace process, bring the parties back to negotiations and implement the road map.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 193 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 10 June 2004 (A/ES-10/270-S/2004/485), constitute a basic record of the crimes committed by the Israeli occupying forces against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nasser **Al-Kidwa**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations